NUMB. LX.

The SPECTATOR.

Hoc eſt quod palles? Cur quis non prandeat, Hoc eſt? Per. Sat. 3.

Wedneſday, May 9. 1711.

THE ſeveral Kinds of falſe Wit that vaniſhed and diſappeared in the refined Ages of the World, diſcovered themſelves again in the Times of Monkiſh Ignorance.

As the Monks were the Maſters of all that little Learning which was then extant, and had their whole Lives entirely diſengaged from Buſineſs, it is no Wonder that ſeveral of them who wanted Genius for higher Performances, employed many Hours in the Compoſition of ſuch Tricks in Writing as required much Time and little Capacity. I have ſeen half the *Æneid* turn'd into Latin Rhymes by one of the *Beaux Eſprits* of that dark Age; who ſays in his Preface to it, that the *Æneid* wanted nothing but the Sweets of Rhyme to make it the moſt perfect Work in its Kind. I have likewiſe ſeen an Hymn in Hexameters to the Virgin *Mary*, which filled a whole Book, tho' it conſiſted only of the eight following Words;

Tot, tibi, ſunt, Virgo, dotes, quot, ſidera, Cœlo.

Thou haſt as many Virtues, O Virgin, as there are Stars in Heaven.

The Poet rung the Chymes upon theſe eight ſeveral Words, and by that Means made his Verſes almoſt as numerous as the Virtues and the Stars which they celebrated. It is no Wonder that Men who had ſo much Time upon their Hands, did not only reſtore all the antiquated Pieces of falſe Wit, but enriched the World with Inventions of their own. It was to this Age that we owe the Production of Anagrams, which is nothing elſe but a Tranſmutation of one Word into another, or the turning of the ſame Set of Letters into different Words; which may change Night into Day, or Black into White, if Chance, who is the Goddeſs that preſides over thoſe Sorts of Compoſition, ſhall ſo direct. I remember a witty Author, in Alluſion to this Kind of Writing, calls his Rival, who (it ſeems) was diſtorted, and had his Limbs ſet in Places that did not properly belong to them, The Anagram of a Man.

When the Anagrammatiſt takes a Name to work upon, he conſiders it at firſt as a Mine not broken up, which will not ſhew the Treaſure it contains till he ſhall have ſpent many Hours in the Search of it: For it is his Buſineſs to find out one Word that conceals itſelf in another, and to examine the Letters in all the Variety of Stations in which they can poſſibly be ranged. I have heard of a Gentleman who, when this Kind of Wit was in faſhion, endeavoured to gain his Miſtreſs's Heart by it. She was one of the fineſt Women of her Age, and was called by the Name of *Mary Boon*. The Lover not being able to make any thing of *Mary*, by certain Liberties indulged to this Kind of writing converted it into *Moll*; and after having ſhut himſelf up for half a Year, with indefatigable Induſtry produced an Anagram. Upon the preſenting it to his Miſtreſs, who was a little vexed in her Heart to ſee her ſelf degraded into *Moll Boon*, ſhe told him, to his infinite Surprize, that he had miſtaken her Sirname, for that it was not *Boon* but *Bohun*.

——— *Ibi omnis*
Effuſus labor. ———

The Lover was thunder-ſtruck with his Misfortune, inſomuch that in a little Time after he loſt his Senſes, which indeed had been very much impaired by that continual Application he had given to his Anagram.

The Acroſtick was probably invented about the ſame Time with the Anagram, tho' it is impoſſible to decide whether the Inventor of the one or the other was the greater Blockhead. The *Simple* Acroſtick is nothing but the Name or Title of a Perſon or Thing made out of the initial Letters of ſeveral Verſes, and by that Means written, after the Manner of the *Chineſe*, in a perpendicular Line. But beſides theſe there are *Compound* Acroſticks, where the principal Letters ſtand two or three deep. I have ſeen ſome of them where the Verſes have not only been edged by a Name at each Extremity, but have had the ſame Name running down like a Seam through the Middle of the Poem.

There is another near Relation of the Anagrams and Acroſticks, which is commonly known by the Name of a Chronogram. This Kind of Wit appears very often on many modern Medals, eſpecially thoſe of *Germany*, when they repreſent in the Inſcription the Year in which they were coined. Thus we ſee on a Medal of *Guſtavus Adolphus* the following Words, CHRISTVS DVX ERGO TRIVMPHVS. If you take the Pains to pick the Figures out of the ſeveral Words, and range them in their proper Order, you will find they amount to MDCXVVVII, or 1627, the Year in which the Medal was ſtamped: For as ſome of the Letters diſtinguiſh themſelves from the reſt, and overtop their Fellows, they are to be conſidered in a double Capacity, both as Letters and as Figures. Your laborious *German* Wits will turn over a whole Dictionary for one of theſe ingenious Devices. A Man would think they were ſearching after an apt claſſical Term, but inſtead of that they are looking out a Word that has an L, an M, or a D in it. When therefore we meet with any of theſe Inſcriptions, we are not ſo much to look in 'em for the Thought, as for the Year of the Lord.

The *Bouts Rimez* were the Favourites of the *French* Nation for a whole Age together, and that at a Time when it abounded in Wit and Learning. They

They were a Liſt of Words that rhyme to one another, drawn up by another Hand, and given to a Poet, who was to make a Poem to the Rhymes in the ſame Order that they were placed upon the Liſt: The more uncommon the Rhymes were, the more extraordinary was the Genius of the Poet that could accommodate his Verſes to them. I don't know any greater Inſtance of the Decay of Wit and Learning among the *French* (which generally follows the Declenſion of Empire), than the endeavouring to reſtore this fooliſh Kind of Wit. If the Reader will be at the Trouble to ſee Examples of it, let him look into the new *Mercure Galant*; where the Author every Month gives a Liſt of Rhymes to be filled up by the Ingenious, in order to be communicated to the Publick in the *Mercure* for the ſucceeding Month. That for the Month of *November*, which now lies before me, is as follows.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Lauriers*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Guerriers*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Muſette*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Liſette*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Ceſars*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Etendars*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Houlette*
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - *Folette*

One would be amazed to ſee ſo learned a Man as *Menage* talking ſeriouſly on this Kind of Triſle in the following Paſſage.

Monſieur de la Chambre *has told me, that he never knew what he was going to write when he took his Pen into his Hand; but that one Sentence always produced another. For my own Part, I never knew what I ſhould write next when I was making Verſes. In the firſt Place I got all my Rhymes together, and was afterwards perhaps three or four Months in filling them up. I one Day ſhewed Monſieur* Gombaud *a Compoſition of this Nature, in which among others I had made uſe of the four following Rhymes,* Amaryllis, Phillis, Marne, Arne, *deſiring him to give me his Opinion of it. He told me immediately, That my Verſes were good for nothing. And upon my asking his Reaſon, he ſaid, becauſe the Rhymes are too common; and for that Reaſon eaſy to be put into Verſe. Marry, ſays I, if it be ſo, I am very well rewarded for all the Pains I have been at. But by Monſieur* Gombaud's *Leave, notwithſtanding the Severity of the Criticiſm, the Verſes were good.* Vid. MENAGIANA. Thus far the learned *Menage*, whom I have tranſlated Word for Word.

The firſt Occaſion of theſe *Bouts Rimez* made them in ſome Manner excuſable, as they were Taſks which the *French* Ladies uſed to impoſe on their Lovers. But when a grave Author, like him abovementioned, taſked himſelf, could there be any thing more ridiculous? Or would not one be apt to believe that the Author played double, and did not make his Liſt of Rhymes till he had finiſhed his Poem?

I ſhall only add, that this Piece of falſe Wit has been finely ridiculed by Monſieur *Saraſin* in a Poem entituled, *La Defaite des Bouts-Rimez*, *The Rout of the Bouts-Rimez.*

I muſt ſubjoyn to this laſt Kind of Wit the double Rhymes, which are uſed in Doggerel Poetry, and generally applauded by ignorant Readers. If the Thought of the Couplet in ſuch Compoſitions is good, the Rhyme adds nothing to it; and if bad, it will not be in the Power of the Rhyme to recommend it. I am afraid that great Numbers of thoſe who admire the incomparable *Hudibras*, do it more on Account of theſe Doggerel Rhymes than of the Parts that really deſerve Admiration. I am ſure I have heard the

Pulpit, Drum Eccleſiaſtick,
Was beat with Fiſt inſtead of a Stick.

and

There was an antient ſage Philoſopher
Who had read Alexander Roſs *over.*

more frequently quoted, than the fineſt Pieces of Wit in the whole Poem.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies of Quality.
For the Benefit of Mrs. KNIGHT.
By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, to Morrow, being Thurſday the 10th of May, will be preſented a Comedy call'd the Tender Husband; or, the Accomplish'd Fools. The Part of Biddy by Mrs. Oldfield, Sir Harry Gubbin by Mr. Bullock, Tipkin by Mr. Norris, Mr. Clerimont by Mr. Mills, Captain Clerimont by Mr. Wilks, Humphry Gubbin by Mr. Penkethman, Mr. Pounce by Mr. Estcourt, Mrs. Clerimont by Mrs. Bradshaw, Aunt by Mrs. Powell. To which will be added, a Farce of one Act only, call'd the Stage-Coach. Tickets may be had at Mr. Linton's Bookſeller in Fleet-ſtreet.

The late Mr. Thomas Brown's Pictures (being a curious but ſmall Collection of the moſt eminent Maſters) will be ſold by Auction to Morrow the 10th Inſtant. The Sale will begin at 11 a Clock in the Forenoon, at the late Monſieur Lyoncrown's Houſe in Leiceſter-Fields, the white Houſe on the Weſt Side of the Square. The Pictures are to be ſeen this Day, before the Sale; and Catalogues had Gratis. There is likewiſe a Parcel of excellent Prints and Drawings of the moſt eminent Maſters, with 6 large Pieces of Tapeſtry Hanging belonging to the ſame Perſon. The Houſe is to be Liſt, with a Stable for 7 Horſes and a Coach-houſes.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Perſons of Quality.
For the Benefit of Mr. Cuthbert, Lovelace and White.

At Stationers-Hall near Ludgate, this Day the 9th of May, will be a Conſort of Vocal and Inſtrumental Muſick by the beſt Performers, particularly, ſeveral ſelect Entertainments of the following (Engliſh) Operas, viz. The Indian Queen, King Arthur, the Fairy Queen, and Dioclesian, the Maſque in Timon of Athens, the Paſtoral in the Libertine, with ſeveral Songs out of the St. Cecilia's Muſick: All compoſ'd by that great Maſter the late Mr. Henry Purcell. Tickets are deliver'd at Gurraway's and Robin's in Exchange-Ally, Will's and Batſon's in Cornhill, Sam's in Ludgate-ſtreet, St. James's and Smyrna Coffee-houſes at St. James's, and at the Hall, at 5 s. per Ticket. Beginning at 6 a Clock.

For Sale by the Candle.

This Day, the 9th Inſtant, at Lloyd's Coffee-houſe in Lombard-ſtreet, at 6 in the Afternoon, (only one Cask in a Lott) viz. 52 Pipes of excellent new Red Canary Florence Wine, deep, bright, freſh and of the right Flavour, neat, an entire Parcel juſt landed, now in a Cellar in the Gateway of Cuſtom-Houſe Key, between Billingſgate and Tower Dock. Alſo 16 Pipes of excellent new Canary Wines, neat, an entire Parcel lately landed, now in Cellar under the Houſe of Mr. Samuel Royſton in Savage Garden, between the Arch in Crouched Fryars and Tower-Hill. All to be ſold till the Time of Sale. Sold by Thomas Tomkins, Broker, in Seething-lane in Tower-ſtreet.

For Sale by the Candle.

On Friday the 11th Inſtant, at Lloyd's Coffee-Houſe in Lombard-ſtreet, at 9 in the Forenoon, and to continue till 7, then ſhall adjourn the Sale to 3 in the Afternoon, and continue the ſame till all the Wines ſhall be ſold, (only 1 Cask in a Lott) viz. The intire Cargoe of the Ship Prince George, Capt. Tho. Stedman, from Barcelona, conſiſting of 2 Butts of new Red Alicant, 155 Butts and 10 Hhds of new Bunecarlos Barcelona Wine, very deep, bright and fine, extraordinary good, and ordinary Note. The ſaid Wines are neat, lately landed, and juſt put into a Cellar No. 12, and Warehouſe No. 13, in the Gateway of Brefh-Ward between London-Bridge and Billingſgate, and in a Warehouſe No. 102 up Stairs in the middle of the ſaid Gateway next the Thames, alſo in a ground Warehouſe No. 18 on the ſaid Brefh-Ward, fronting the Thames. All to be ſeen and taſted from 7 of the Clock this Morning to 7 in the Evening, and on Thurſday. (The Buyers are invited and deſired to appear punctually at the Place of Sale at the Hour appointed, viz. 9 a Clock, becauſe the Lotts are many, and all determined to be ſold the aboveſaid Friday. Catalogues to be had where the Wines are to be ſold, at the Cellar and Warehouſes where they lye, and at Tho. Tomkins's, in Seething-lane in Tower-ſtreet.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.